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ABSTRACT

This paper compares the responses of rural educators from northeastern Kentucky to those of a national sample of respondents completing Phi Delta Kappa's survey, "How Teenagers Respond." This survey aimed to determine what common values adults believe adolescents possess. Thirty-five administrators and teachers from middle schools and high schools in northeastern Kentucky completed the survey, which asked respondents to estimate how adolescents in their school would respond to various values questions. The majority of respondents from both samples were White married female teachers who lived and taught in small towns and rural areas. Respondents from the local sample reached consensus on predicting how teenagers would respond to 25 of 43 value statements, but were undecided on the remaining 18 statements. That is, on 25 of 43 statements at least 67 percent of respondents agreed on a predicted response. In comparison, the national sample of educators reached consensus on 29 of 43 statements, but were undecided on adolescents' responses to 14 statements. Despite the large disparity in sample sizes (35 and 2,163), the relative percentage of educators predicting how teenagers would respond on each statement were similar. In general, rural Kentucky educators believed that teens subscribe to democratic ideals over authoritarianism, are susceptible to peer pressure, yearn for parental understanding, feel that their generation faces tough situations, and are unclear about what values their parents hold or the role honesty should play in real life situations. Implications for practice and future research are addressed. Includes survey questionnaire and data tables. (LP)

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ED 405 162

How Would Teenagers Respond? :

Rural Educator Estimates on Selected Core Value Statements

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Daniel Fasko, Jr.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Tuscaloosa, AL, November 1996.

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Abstract

Teen violence, crime, drug abuse, and unwed pregnancies are a concern to parents and educators. This research has been guided by a study by Phi Delta Kappa on Core Values which was undertaken to determine if there are common values, such as honesty, civility, equality, freedom, and responsibility on which all people in the United States agree. The present study is an attempt to determine what values adults believe teens hold. A sample of rural educators were surveyed to provide their views to Phi Delta Kappa's (PDK) survey, "How Teenagers Respond" and their responses were compared to a national PDK sample. The local educator estimates of teenagers' responses were in congruence to educator estimates nationally. In general, educators in this region believe teens subscribe to democratic ideals over authoritarianism, are susceptible to peer pressure, yearn for parental understanding, feel that their generation faces tough situations, and are unclear about what values their parents hold and the role honesty should play in real life. Implications for research and practice will be discussed.

How would teenagers respond? :

Rural educators estimates on selected core value statements

Values may be defined as "principles or standards of behavior, generally expressed as basic beliefs about sight and wrong, good and bad, and appropriate and inappropriate behavior" (Frymier, Cunningham, Duckett, Gansneder, Link, Rimmer, Scholz, 1996, p.8). The values children display are internalized as a result of growing up in the context of a specific family. Children generally exhibit a commitment to the same values perspective of their families. These values, or social rules, begin to be affected by children's peer groups in early adolescence. Growing up in a single parent family has been linked with more peer pressure to engage in non-adult approved behavior (Barber & Eccles, 1992).

Results from a study using The Moral Dilemmas Test (Bronfenbrenner, Devereux, Suci, & Rodgers, 1965), in which adolescents must choose between behavior that is adult-approved and peer- approved, indicate that as children enter adolescence, their decisions are more heavily influenced by age-mates. Females, in general, were more likely to choose socially-approved behaviors, that is, actions approved by adults (Andersson, 1979).

However, Devereux (1992) reported that the development of values was affected by the authority-orientation of the parents. If the parental style is authoritarian, internalization of social rules is hindered. Internalization of adult-endorsed practices is more likely to take place if the parental style could be characterized as authoritative. The less internalized the social rules, the more likely the individual might give in to temptation in the absence of adult authority figures.

In addition, national and or cultural child-rearing traditions have a direct bearing on

the choices made by adolescents toward non-adult-approved behavior (Devereux, 1972). For example, young Hispanic-American girls are taught that "belonging" is highly important. Therefore, relationships with peers at adolescence more heavily influence their decision-making than male's decision-making (Florez-Ortiz, 1994).

Although one must be aware of age differences in cross-cultural studies, Swedish children chose similar responses to American children in reacting to the scenarios in The Moral Dilemmas Test (Bronfenbrener, et al., 1965). In these scenarios children were asked to choose between responses which indicated behavior by one's peer group and behavior affiliated with adult expectations (Andersson, 1979).

Other research with adolescents, who completed a self-rating inventory, indicated that being associated with the values of adults had a negative correlation with being accepted by one's peers. (Allen, Weissberg, & Hawkins, 1989). Thus, as adolescence approaches, children may exhibit rejection of parental values as a form of independence-seeking (Fasick, 1984). However, while adolescents are more tolerant of non-adult approved values, they eventually exhibit the basic values of their parents. Throughout their life span they increasingly adhere to the legitimacy of these values (Roscoe & Peterson, 1989).

One of the questions that guided the Phi Delta Kappa Study of Core Values (SCV) was: "Are there certain values on which we agree?" (Frymier, Cunningham, Duckett, Gansneder, Link, Rimmer, & Scholz, 1995, p.1). Two of Frymier et al.'s (1995) findings are notable to this study. That is, (1)" [e]ducators accept democratic values as important for children to learn in school", and (2) "[t]there are many values on which we agree." (p.3). These values include honesty, civility, equality, learning, freedom, and responsibility.

The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of a survey of rural educators on the questionnaire "How Would Teenagers Respond" which was developed by Phi Delta Kappa (PDK).

Method

Sample

The respondents were two principals, one superintendent, 31 teachers and one "unknown" (data missing). Sixty-nine percent and 31% of the sample were females and males, respectively. Eighty percent of the sample of educators were married, whereas 11% and 9% were single or divorced, respectively. The average respondent age was 40 (Mean 39, Median 40.5, Mode 37). The model education level was Master's Degree (54%) followed by Specialist Degree (17%), Bachelor's Degree (14%), and Doctor's Degree (4%); one respondent did not report education level. Ninety-four percent of respondents were White/Non-Hispanic; 89% were Protestant and 11% were unreported. The majority of respondents lived and worked in a small town (49% and 63%). Twenty-six percent reported living in a rural area and 14% reported teaching in a rural area; 9% both lived and worked in small cities and 17% did not respond.

Local area respondent demographics were quite similar to the national sample demographics in gross overview: the majority of respondents in both samples were female; they were married, white, Protestant teachers who lived and taught in small towns, cities or rural areas.

Materials

How Teenagers Would Respond (Phi Delta Kappa, 1994) contains 43 statements,

which ask respondents to estimate how teenagers in their school would respond to various value questions. (See Appendix A for the survey).

Procedure

In the fall of 1994, local area middle school and high school teachers, principals, and superintendents were contacted and asked to provide their views to PDK's survey, "How Teenagers Would Respond", which takes about 30 minutes to complete. Survey instrument packets, which included instructions and the purpose of the study, were distributed to the teachers, principals, and superintendents with prepaid postage envelopes for return. Participants responded on optical scan survey forms provided by PDK. After the questionnaires were completed, they were forwarded to PDK for analysis. The present study compared the local region to the national sample.

Results and Discussion

Statement Estimates

Thirty-five instruments were returned for a survey response rate of 33%. The sample of northeastern Kentucky educators reached definite consensus (D) on estimating how teenagers would respond to 25 of 43 value statements but were undecided (U) on the remaining 18 statements. That is, on 25 of 43 statements at least 67% of respondents agreed as to how teenagers would respond whereas on 18 statements fewer than 67% of respondents agreed on a predicted response. In comparison, the national sample of educators reached consensus (67% predicting a specific teenager response) on 29 of 43 value statements, but were undecided (fewer than 67% predicted a given response) as to teen response on 14 statements.

In this survey, northeastern Kentucky educators made decision estimates congruent with the decision estimates of PDK's national educator sample on 31 value statements. That is, on each of 31 value statements both samples' respondents either reached definite consensus (D) as to how teenagers would respond (21 of 31 statements) or both samples' respondents were undecided (U) and no predictive consensus was reached (10 of 31 statements). Table 1, a comparison of congruent decision estimates on "How Teenagers Would Respond" by survey item: Northeastern Kentucky Educators vs National Data, displays the relative percents of response for each sample. A "Decision" indicator displays **"D"** for those statements where a definite consensus was reached (there was at least a 67% response agreement) or **"U"** for those statements where there was no consensus (less than 67% response agreement). These are the same estimates that PDK used for its national sample.

Despite the large disparity in samples sizes (35 and 2,163), the relative percentage of educators predicting that teens would respond "yes" or "no" on each statement are remarkably similar in magnitude and with one exception in the same direction. These local educator estimates of teen response are congruent to educator estimates nationally. In general, then, educators in this region believe teens subscribe to democratic ideals over authoritarianism, are as susceptible to peer pressure as teens nationally, yearn for parental understanding, feel that their generation faces the "toughest row to hoe" and appear to be unclear (1) as to what values their parents hold or (2) the role "honesty" should play in real life.

On one hand 77% of regional educators (78% of national educators) agreed that teens

would say "yes" to **My generation is more apt to lie or cheat than my parent's generation.** Then, both samples of educators predicted a 90% plus "yes" response to **Being honest is a good idea, theoretically, but everybody cheats sometimes, just to get along.** Educators were undecided (at about 50% each) as to whether or not teens would think **Most students who don't cheat are a real disadvantage in some classes;** agreed on an 80% estimate that "yes" teens would **lie** to get a job (if they wouldn't get caught) and that 80% of teens would say "yes" to I believe that **In today's society, one has to lie or cheat, at least occasionally, in order to succeed.** Both samples of educators were undecided as to whether or not teens would respond "yes" to **My ethics and behavior are consistent with how I was raised, and my parents would be satisfied with my ethics and my beliefs,** or as to whether or not teens would report "yes" to **My parents spend a lot of time helping me learn about "right" and "wrong" in the world.**

Among 31 response comparisons in Table 1, on only one statement did the majority of educators in one sample differ from educators in the other sample in predicting the direction (yes or no) of teenagers' response. On survey statement number 12, **Democracy depends fundamentally upon people being honest,** 57% of northeastern Kentucky educators in this sample estimated that teenagers would disagree (choose "no") whereas 62% of educators in the national sample estimated that teens would agree (choose "yes") with the statement. Although no consensus was reached in either group (fewer than 67% of respondents chose "yes" or "no"), the directional tendencies differ. The national sample of educators tends toward estimating that teens will agree with the statement whereas the regional sample educators tend toward estimating that teens will disagree with that statement.

The direction of response prediction in the regional sample may be due to the very small regional sample size coupled with the indecision engendered by the statement. Here, direction may mean very little, given the cloudy issue.

There were a total of 12 survey statements on which the samples of educators differed in consensus. Regional educators reached definite consensus (67% or more agreed) on four statements and were undecided as to teen response on eight statements. The national sample of educators reached consensus on eight statements and were undecided on the remaining four. Table 2, A comparison of divergent decision estimates on "How Would Teenagers Respond" by Survey Item: Northeastern Kentucky Educators vs National Data, displays the relative percents of response for each sample and consensus indicators ("D" or"U") for each sample on each statement.

Although technically, these 12 statements represent divergent decisions (definite for one sample, undecided for the other sample) the highest percentage of consensus for either sample on these 12 statements was 74%. In fact, in general, the differences in group estimations are not very extreme with possibly one exception. There was a 27 % difference in group educator prediction of teen responding to **If a teacher sees a student cheating on an exam, the teacher should take firm action to assure that the cheater suffers a negative consequence.** Regional educators in this sample remained uncertain as to how teens would respond but 57% estimated disagreement with the statement ("no"). Seventy percent of the national educator sample agreed that teens would agree with the same statement. Again, the difference in responding may be due primarily to the small regional size, but the uncertainty and direction of regional response is somewhat surprising.

Overall, despite the small sample size, our regional findings tend to substantially agree with the PDK national results of educator estimates as to "How Would Teenagers Respond?" Thus, there appears to be agreement on several basic values inherent in our democratic society.

Conclusions

Implications for Research

Although there is agreement on which values are important, that is democratic versus authoutarian values, there are many values oriented problems facing our society; that is, crime, drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, hate talk, and violence to name a few (Frymeir, et al., 1995). It is apparent that further research should be conducted in schools to determine the relationship between the democratic values of honesty, civility, equality, learning, freedom, and responsibility (Frymier, et al., 1995) to the above mentioned values problems. In addition, research is needed to determine whether students' perceptions of the values on the PDK survey are different from educators' and administrators' perceptions reported. Another area of needed study is a comparison of how educators would respond to the survey items themselves compared to their projection of teen responses and actual teen responses.

Implications for Practice

Since there is agreement on which values are important, and since our schools are one agent of including democratic values in children and adolescents, it would seem appropriate that schools develop appropriate means to develop these values in students. Obviously, values such as honesty, civility, equality, learning, freedom, and responsibility are behaviors all parents and educators wish children and adolescents to demonstrate. Perhaps, then, schools

should be at the forefront in insuring that these skills are acquired.

By instilling these values in students, schools would be better able to deal with values problems, such as crime, drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, hate talk, and violence. Afterall, since parents entrust their children and adolescents to the schools and their personnel, it seems appropriate that they assist parents in preventing and/or decreasing these problems.

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Table 1 A Comparison of Congruent Decision Estimates on "How Would Teenagers Respond" by Survey Item: Northeastern Kentucky Educators vs. National Data

Survey Item	Statement	Northeastern KY Yes	Northeastern KY No	National Yes	National No	Decision
1	My generation is more apt to lie or cheat than my parent's generation.	77%	23%	79%	21%	D
2	My generation faces much tougher competition than my parent's generation.	97%	3%	94%	6%	D
4 *	Being honest is a good idea; theoretically, but everybody cheats sometimes, just to get along.	94%	6%	92%	8%	D
5	Most students who don't cheat are at a real disadvantage in some classes.	49%	51%	50%	50%	U
6	Most students at my school don't really care whether students cheat.	74%	26%	67%	33%	D
7	Most teachers who see a student cheating will do nothing or will simply warn the student.	51%	49%	45%	55%	U
9 *	It is not always wrong to cheat on an exam.	66%	34%	57%	43%	U
10	If it is necessary to get a job I want, and I am sure I would not get caught, I would lie.	80%	20%	76%	24%	D
11	In today's society, one has to lie or cheat, at least occasionally, in order to succeed.	80%	20%	76%	24%	D
12	Democracy depends fundamentally upon people being honest.	43%	57%	62%	38%	U
15 **	In some cases, the police should be allowed to search a home, even though they do not have a search warrant.	29%	71%	25%	75%	D
17 *	Persons who refuse to testify against themselves (that is, give evidence that would show they are guilty of criminal acts) should either be made to talk or be severely punished.	26%	74%	21%	79%	D
18	Sending letters and telegrams to Congressmen has little influence upon legislators.	94%	6%	79%	21%	D
20 *	Most people who don't believe in God are bad people.	23%	77%	18%	82%	D
21	I believe that faith is better than thinking for solving life's important questions.	23%	77%	24%	76%	D
22	Our fate in the hereafter depends on how we behave on earth.	60%	40%	60%	40%	U
24 *	There is an "every person for himself" attitude in this school.	74%	26%	68%	32%	D
25	My ethics and behavior are consistent with how I was raised, and my parents would be satisfied with my ethics and my beliefs.	60%	40%	64%	36%	U
27 *	I use alcohol sometimes, when my friends encourage me to do so.	69%	31%	79%	21%	D
28	I use drugs sometimes, when my friends encourage me to do so.	57%	43%	51%	49%	U
29	I have engaged in sexual activity with friends of the opposite sex.	71%	29%	68%	31%	D
31 *	What my friends say about right and wrong is more important than what my parents say.	71%	29%	73%	27%	D
32	Teachers in my school act as if things are more important than people.	43%	57%	50%	50%	U
34 *	Teachers are more concerned about who is right than what is right.	63%	37%	54%	46%	U
35	Teachers put a lot of pressure on students to learn.	91%	9%	82%	18%	D
37 *	My parents spend a lot of time helping me learn about "right" and "wrong" in the world.	43%	57%	46%	54%	U
38	My friends put a lot of pressure on me to do what they say is "right", even when it's "wrong", according to what my parents or teachers say.	77%	23%	75%	25%	D
39	I wish my parents would spend more time talking with me and listening to me.	88%	12%	82%	18%	D
40	Ideas about "what is right" and "what is wrong" change over time.	94%	6%	90%	10%	D
41	People in this school complain about things, but are reluctant to do anything about them.	91%	9%	91%	9%	D
43 *	I have answered every one of these questions with absolute honesty.	91%	9%	85%	15%	D

† Congruent Decision Estimates of both groups were "D" (Decision of 67% or more agreement) or "U" (Undecided or less than 67% agreement)

* Indicates previous survey items missing from this table

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Table 2. A Comparison of Divergent Decision Estimates* on "How Would Teenagers Respond" by Survey Item: Northeastern Kentucky Educators vs. National Data

Survey Item	Statement	Northeastern KY Yes	No	Decision	National Yes	No	Decision
3	My generation is more selfish than my parent's generation.	68%	32%	D	60%	40%	U
8	If a teacher sees a student cheating on an exam, the teacher should take firm action to assure that the cheater suffers a negative consequence.	43%	57%	U	70%	30%	D
13	Newspapers and magazines should be allowed to print anything they want, except military secrets.	65%	35%	U	68%	32%	D
14	The government should prohibit some people from making speeches.	34%	66%	U	27%	73%	D
16	Certain groups should not be allowed to hold public meetings, even though they gather peaceably and only make speeches.	35%	65%	U	30%	70%	D
19	If a person is uncertain how to vote, it is better if he or she does not vote.	74%	26%	D	63%	37%	U
23	God controls everything that happens to people.	34%	66%	U	25%	75%	D
26	It is important that those who know me well think of me as honest and upright.	66%	34%	U	69%	31%	D
30	My parents are very interested in my activities and work at school.	29%	71%	D	47%	53%	U
33	Teachers treat students better if their parents are wealthy or "important."	74%	26%	D	62%	38%	U
36	My teachers spend a lot of time helping me learn about "right" and "wrong" in the world.	37%	63%	U	31%	69%	D
42	I have often been rebuked or reprimanded in a way that unduly embarrassed or humiliated me.	66%	34%	U	68%	32%	D

* Divergent Decision Estimates indicates that for each survey item, one group decision estimate was "D" (Definite or 67% or more agreement) whereas the other group decision estimate was "U" (Undecided or less than 67% agreement)

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Appendix A

Sex
- Male
- Female

Marital Status
- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed

Age

Racial/Ethnic Background
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- Hispanic
- Middle Eastern
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- White/Non-Hispanic
- Other

Zip Code
General Location

Education Level
- Not a High School Graduate
- High School Graduate
- Junior College Graduate
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Specialist's Degree
- Doctor's Degree

Religious Preference
- Catholic
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Protestant
- Other
- None

Where do...

	You Live	You Work
Major City Metropolitan (over 1 million)	○	○
Major City Suburban	○	○
Large City Metropolitan (over 500,000)	○	○
Large City Suburban	○	○
Medium City Metropolitan (over 100,000)	○	○
Medium City Suburban	○	○
Small City (over 25,000)	○	○
Small Town	○	○
Rural	○	○

Occupation
- Teacher
- Principal
- Superintendent
- School Board Member
- College-Level Faculty
- Full-Time Graduate Student
- Noneducator

How Would Teenagers Respond?

How would teenagers in your school respond to the following statements about values? You work with teenagers every day. Put yourself in their shoes. Ask yourself: "What would most of my students think about these issues?" Answer each question by making your best estimate of how teenagers in your school would respond.

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the oval under "YES" or "NO" after each statement, according to how you think most teenagers in your school would respond. Do NOT indicate your own values. Use a No. 2 pencil.

- Do not use ink, ballpoint, or felt tip pens.
- Make solid marks that fill the oval completely.
- Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
- Make no stray marks on this form.
- Do not fold, tear, or mutilate this form.

CORRECT MARK ●

INCORRECT MARKS ✓ ⊘ ● ⊙

Most teenagers would say

Statement	Yes	No
1. My generation is more apt to lie or cheat than my parent's generation.	○	○
2. My generation faces much tougher competition than my parent's generation.	○	○
3. My generation is more selfish than my parent's generation.	○	○
4. Being honest is a good idea, theoretically, but everybody cheats sometimes, just to get along.	○	○
5. Most students who don't cheat are at a real disadvantage in some classes.	○	○
6. Most students at my school don't really care whether students cheat.	○	○
7. Most teachers who see a student cheating will do nothing or will simply warn the student.	○	○

Most teenagers would s

Statement	Yes	No
8. If a teacher sees a student cheating on an exam, the teacher should take firm action to assure that the cheater suffers a negative consequence.	O	O
9. It is not always wrong to cheat on an exam.	O	O
10. If it is necessary to get a job I want, and I am sure I would not get caught, I would lie.	O	O
11. In today's society, one has to lie or cheat, at least occasionally, in order to succeed.	O	O
12. Democracy depends fundamentally upon people being honest.	O	O
13. Newspapers and magazines should be allowed to print anything they want, except military secrets.	O	O
14. The government should prohibit some people from making speeches.	O	O
15. In some cases, the police should be allowed to search a home, even though they do not have a search warrant.	O	O
16. Certain groups should not be allowed to hold public meetings, even though they gather peaceably and only make speeches.	O	O
17. Persons who refuse to testify against themselves (that is, give evidence that would show they are guilty of criminal acts) should either be made to talk or be severely punished.	O	O
18. Sending letters and telegrams to Congressmen has little influence upon legislators.	O	O
19. If a person is uncertain how to vote, it is better if he or she does not vote.	O	O
20. Most people who don't believe in God are bad people.	O	O
21. I believe that faith is better than thinking for solving life's important questions.	O	O
22. Our fate in the hereafter depends on how we behave on earth.	O	O
23. God controls everything that happens to people.	O	O
24. There is an "every person for himself" attitude in this school.	O	O
25. My ethics and behavior are consistent with how I was raised, and my parents would be satisfied with my ethics and my beliefs.	O	O
26. It is important that those who know me well think of me as honest and upright.	O	O
27. I use alcohol sometimes, when my friends encourage me to do so.	O	O
28. I use drugs sometimes, when my friends encourage me to do so.	O	O
29. I have engaged in sexual activity with friends of the opposite sex.	O	O
30. My parents are very interested in my activities and work at school.	O	O
31. What my friends say about right and wrong is more important than what my parents say.	O	O
32. Teachers in my school act as if things are more important than people.	O	O
33. Teachers treat students better if their parents are wealthy or "important."	O	O
34. Teachers are more concerned about who is right than what is right.	O	O
35. Teachers put a lot of pressure on students to learn.	O	O
36. My teachers spend a lot of time helping me learn about "right" and "wrong" in the world.	O	O
37. My parents spend a lot of time helping me learn about "right" and "wrong" in the world.	O	O
38. My friends put a lot of pressure on me to do what they say is "right," even when it's "wrong," according to what my parents or teachers say.	O	O
39. I wish my parents would spend more time talking with me and listening to me.	O	O
40. Ideas about "what is right" and "what is wrong" change over time.	O	O
41. People in this school complain about things, but are reluctant to do anything about them.	O	O
42. I have often been rebuked or reprimanded in a way that unduly embarrassed or humiliated me.	O	O
43. I have answered every one of these questions with absolute honesty.	O	O

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